

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1424

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: SOCIALIST RIFT MAY STRENGTHEN PARTY

REF: A) LISBON 5642; B) LISBON 5669

SUMMARY: SOCIALIST PARTY HAS LOST ITS LEFT WING EXTREMISTS LED
BY MANUEL SERRA. 'SERRISTAS' HAVE FORMED NEW NON-ELECTORAL
GROUP TO CAMPAIGN FOR 'TRUE' LABOR-BASED SOCIALISM. NEW POPULAR
SOCIALIST FRONT ASSERTS IT WILL SIPHON LARGE PERCENTAGE OF
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MILITANTS FROM PS, ALTHOUGH THIS DOUBTFUL. SOCIALISTS WILL

PROBABLY BE STRONGER AND MORE COHERENT AS RESULT OF SCHISM, AND THEIR ELECTORAL SUPPORT SHOULD IMPROVE WITH LEFT WING ROMANTICS GONE. POPULAR SOCIALIST FRONT UNLIKELY TO BE FORCE OF ANY SIGNIFICANCE IN PORTUGUESE POLITICS. END SUMMARY.

1. LEADERS OF LEFT WING OF PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY, MANUEL SERRA, AND A NUMBER OF HIS SUPPORTERS WHO RAN WITH HIM ON DEFEATED LIST B IN LAST CONGRESS (REF A), HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR WITHDRAWAL FROM PS AND CREATION OF NEW GROUP CALLED FRENTE O SOCIALISTA POPULAR (FSP).

2. AT JANUARY 9 PRESS CONFERENCE AT WHICH ESTABLISHMENT OF FSP ANNOUNCED, MANUEL SERRA AND 10 FOLLOWERS EXPLAINED REASONS WHICH LED THEM TO BREAK FROM PS. PRINCIPAL EXPLANATION GIVEN WAS THAT RESULTS OF POST-CONGRESS VOTING FOR LEADERSHIP ORGANS OF PS CONVINCED THEM THAT PS IS A PARTY WHICH NOT REALLY BASED ON LABORING CLASS, THAT IT HAS MADE "GRAVE" COMPROMISES WITH RULING CLASSES, INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, AND WITH RIGHT WING ADVENTURERS. SINCE SERRA'S OPPOSITION LIST B HAD WON ABOUT 40 PERCENT OF VOTE AT CONGRESS, FSP'S FOUNDERS STATED THEY BELIEVE LEADERSHIP BODIES OF PARTY SHOULD HAVE CONTAINED ABOUT THAT MANY SERRISTAS. HOWEVER THIS PERCENTAGE NOT REFLECTED IN NATIONAL COMMISSION NOR SECRETARIAT, TO WHICH ONLY ONE SERRA SUPPORTER EACH ELECTED. LEFT WING FROZEN OUT OF PS LEADERSHIP AFTER 'WITCH HUNT' AGAINST THEM, RESULT BEING, ACCORDING TO SERRA, THAT TRUE SOCIALISTS HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO QUIT PARTY. SERRA CLAIMED THAT HE HAD NO QUARREL WITH PS PROGRAM AS ENACTED AT CONGRESS, BUT HAD NO CONFIDENCE IN THOSE PARTY HAS CHOSEN TO CARRY OUT PROGRAM.

3. ALTHOUGH ONLY A HANDFUL OF PERSONS READILY IDENTIFIABLE AS BELONGING TO NEW GROUP, SERRA ASSERTS THAT "THOUSANDS OF MILITANTS" FROM EVERY SECTION IN PARTY HAVE INDICATED THEIR ADHERENCE TO FSP. HE SAID HE BELIEVED REAL MILITANTS OF PS WILL JOIN FSP, PERHAPS UP TO 40 PER CENT OF TOTAL PS MEMBERSHIP. NEW GROUP DOES NOT HAVE PLANS AT THIS TIME TO BECOME A PARTY AND COMPETE IN ELECTIONS. PROGRAM OF FSP FUZZY AT THIS STAGE, BASICALLY CALLING FOR LABOR UNITY (BUT NOT LEGALLY IMPOSED UNITARY LABOR CONFEDERATION) AND WIDESPREAD NATIONALIZATION OF ECONOMY.

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4. COMMENT: IF UNCLEAR WHY SERRA, WHOSE LIST B ALMOST WON INTERIM ELECTION FOR NATIONAL COMMISSION AND SECRETARIAT (REFB) IN LATE DECEMBER, AND WHOSE CHANCES FOR VICTORY IN FINAL ELECTIONS LATER THIS MONTH SEEMED GREAT, DECIDED TO QUIT SOCIALISTS. PROBABILITY IS THAT HE FORCED OUT BY SKILLFUL MANEUVERING OF MODERATES, A NUMBER OF WHOM HAVE TOLD EMBOFFS IN LAST FEW WEEKS THAT THEY URGED SOARES PURGE SERRA BEFORE HE

DESTROYED PARTY ELECTORALLY AND ORGANIZATIONALLY. IT VERY
IMPROBABLE THAT SERRA WILL BE ABLE TO ENTICE ANYTHING LIKE
40 PERCENT OF PS MILITANTS TO ITS FSP RANKS. ALTHOUGH IT A FACT
HIS LIST OBTAINED A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF VOTES IN ELECTIONS
FOR LEADERSHIP OF PARTY, WE ARE TOLD MUCH OF VOTE FOR HIS LIST
REALLY A PROTEST VOTE AGAINST INCLUSION OF CERTAIN FORMER
LEADERS LIKE TITO DE MORAIS (BLAMED FOR POOR ORGANIZATION OF
PARTY) ON SOARES LIST. WE BELIEVE THAT SOCIALISTS, DESPITE
LOSS OF SOME OF ITS MOST AGGRESSIVE AND COMMITTED FSP MILITANTS,
WILL BE AT VERY LEAST MORE IDEOLOGICALLY COHERENT NOW THAT
LEFT WING 'ROMANTICISTS' GONE. IT ALSO LIKELY TO BE MORE
COHESIVE PARTY AND AN EASIER ORGANIZATION TO DIRECT NOW
THAT NEED TO PLACATE SERRA AND ACCOMMODATE HIS DEMANDS HAS
ENDED. FSP ALONE UNLIKELY TO BE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL FORCE
IN FUTURE.
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